



## quarterly news

The following publications are available upon request:

- Patterns of Global Terrorism
- Supporting Human Rights and Democracy
- Trafficking in Persons Report
- Consular Notification and Access
- IGA: Working with State and Local Governments
- Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts
- U.S. Department of State: A Guide to Doing Business
- Country Background Notes
- Travel Tips for Students
- Travel Warnings



Winter 2006

**Message from the Director**

While the State Department plays an active role in nearly every country in the world (we have diplomatic relations with 187 of the world's 192 countries) many people have a less clear understanding of the work we do right here at home. It's likely that when you turn on the TV and see Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discussing the North Korean nuclear testing crisis and other international issues, you only envision the State Department employees who analyze foreign affairs and then develop far-reaching policies. That's really only part of the story.

On the domestic front, there are the obvious things we do, such as processing passports or helping American citizens overseas return home in times of crisis. However, did you know that through our Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, we help bring almost 30,000 foreign exchange students to the U.S. each year? We also provide financial support to organizations like Sister Cities International, which creates and strengthens partnerships between U.S. cities and towns – and communities abroad. Every year, we also answer thousands of inquiries (via telephone, mail and email) from everyday Americans about U.S. foreign policy and international travel.

All these services are designed to help Americans maintain closer relationships with the world around us, and to continue building a positive, accurate image of America.

As always, for more information on our domestic and international programs, please visit [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). And as a state or local government official, we always invite you to contact us directly by phone or email with your questions about U.S. foreign policy.

*Anthony Welcher, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs*

**Rebuilding Lebanon: Ambitious Goals Backed by the American People**

Plans to rebuild Lebanon after this summer's conflict are moving forward with support from the American people. Hoping to address the immediate and long-term needs of innocent civilians, the United States Government is contributing over \$230 million in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. President Bush has said that the gift will strengthen Lebanon's sovereign, democratic government, ensuring a lasting peace.



©AP/WWP

***What is the scene like in Lebanon now?***

The Government of Lebanon's Higher Relief Council reports that 80% of displaced persons have returned to their home areas since August 14. Most of the remaining 200,000 displaced persons and refugees are staying with host families.

Workers have restored electric power more quickly than originally anticipated. The United Nations reports that relief agencies are now shifting water and sanitation activities to support government and municipal water authorities, as generators are now available. The World Health Organization has urged agencies to focus on preventing outbreaks of waterborne diseases as the rainy season approaches.

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## **Rebuilding Lebanon: Ambitious Goals Backed by the American People (cont.)**

### ***How are displaced families in Lebanon coping?***

The International Organization for Migration conducted a psychosocial assessment of displaced Lebanese. Initial results confirmed that the displaced population suffers from conflict-related stress, prompting calls for more services to address those critical needs.

On September 30, a team of United Nations engineers arrived in Lebanon. The team is examining key environmental hazards including waste rubble, medical and industrial waste, coastal marine pollution, asbestos, and ground water contamination.

### ***What is the U.S. doing to help?***

To meet the most urgent needs, USAID has dispatched a Disaster Assistance Response Team to Lebanon. Since July 25, the U.S. has committed over \$55 million for such high

priority items as food, water, sanitation, emergency relief supplies, and shelter.

### ***Will U.S. involvement end there?***

U.S. assistance is ongoing. On September 22, a delegation of private sector leaders appointed by President George W. Bush arrived in Lebanon to observe areas affected by the recent conflict. The delegation met with Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and business leaders to discuss rebuilding priorities.

Upon their return, the delegation launched <http://www.lebanonpartnership.org>, a U.S. campaign for a private reconstruction fund for Lebanon. Global Impact, a U.S.-based non-governmental organization, will manage the fund, which will complement the \$230 million in aid already pledged by the U.S. Government. ■

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*For more information on U.S. assistance to Lebanon, visit:  
[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/middle\\_east/](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/middle_east/)*



Lexington, Kentucky Mayor Teresa Isaac will be featured in a documentary produced by the Lebanese Broadcasting Corp.

## **ON THE AIR: U.S. Mayor Discusses American 'Opportunity' and 'Freedom' with Lebanese TV Audience**

In a documentary scheduled to air on Lebanese television in November, Lexington, Kentucky Mayor Teresa Isaac speaks candidly about her family's deep-rooted American values. The program looks at Isaac's experiences as an American elected official of Arab heritage.

"My grandparents came to America looking for two things: freedom and economic opportunity," Isaac said she explained to a correspondent from the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, which airs programming throughout Lebanon and the world. Isaac says her grandparents' dreams were realized, and she will always be deeply grateful. "Now I have dedicated my life to trying to pay back this country for the many things we were given," she said.

There have been struggles to overcome, and Isaac discusses them in the documentary. In 2002, when Isaac ran for mayor of her vibrant city of 270,000 people, she said opponents dumped leaflets around several Lexington synagogues, suggesting she might have ties to terrorists because of her Arab heritage. "Fortunately the people of my city are very open-minded," Isaac said. Her victory on election day made Lexington the largest city in the U.S. with an Arab-American mayor.

Isaac is not the first elected official in her family. Her father, Sam Isaac, served as mayor of Cumberland, Kentucky in the 1960's. He was a strong supporter of civil rights for African Americans – values that have influenced policies in Lexington, where Teresa Isaac strengthened a program that trained women- and minority- owned business owners to better compete for city contracts. In 2003, the U.S. Conference of Mayors included the program in its compilation of "Best Small Business Practices." Also, during Isaac's administration, Forbes Magazine included Lexington on its list of "Top Ten Best Places to Live."

Isaac has also participated in U.S. State Department-sponsored programs, training mayors on good governance in Argentina and Chile and joining a U.S. team that monitored Palestinian elections in January 2006.

It's a busy schedule for a candidate who is again on the campaign trail, seeking re-election this November. Why the travel to the Middle East?

In an interview with Newsweek, Isaac said "I wanted to put an Arab-American face on some U.S. foreign policies, so that people in other countries can see that Arabs do have opportunities in the U.S." The Newsweek article featured Isaac and other Arab-American leaders.

Although a world traveler, Isaac has never been to Lebanon, where she has familial ties to the cities of Zahle and Antoura. She was scheduled to lead a trade mission to Beirut for the Arab American Chamber of Commerce, but the trip was cancelled after this summer's conflict. Isaac hopes the mission will resume soon. ■

## IRAQI FREEDOM: A View From the Ground

### A State Department Officer's First-Person Account of Iraq's Transformation

My name is Neil Zimmerman, and I've spent six of the last 18 months in Iraq. During my first three trips, I was part of a team sent to assist with the surge of Western media descending on Iraq to cover elections held in January, October, and December of 2005. During my fourth trip, I helped journalists file stories about the U.S. Embassy, Coalition Forces, and the Iraqi people, by identifying stories and events across Iraq and then organizing trips for members of the media.

I really enjoyed my job, especially the opportunity to venture out of the International Zone (often referred to as the Green Zone) and interact with local Iraqis and the professionals in our armed forces and diplomatic corps. Each person I met took



The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq's Dr. Fared Ayer speaks to journalists as ballots are prepared for distribution.

great pride in their work and responsibilities: from the commanding officers at headquarters, to the lance corporals driving our convoys; from the Iraqis that organized and ran their national elections, to Iraqi mothers at a women's conference learning about their role in the democratic process.

One media trip I found particularly satisfying centered around assuring Iraqis – and the world – that the January 30, 2005

elections were indeed on track. We organized a trip with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) to take Western and Iraqi media to the airport where ballots were being loaded onto trucks to be delivered to polling stations across the country.

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## Q&A: Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

As part of our goal to keep state and local officials up-to-date on the important new Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, IGA arranged a briefing for Washington-based staffers. The meeting took place on October 17 at the Hall of States on Capitol Hill.

### What are the main goals of WHTI?

- When fully implemented, WHTI will require that travelers entering the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda present a passport or other secure method of identification that denotes identity and citizenship. We believe the document requirement will make cross-border travel easier, because it will greatly reduce the number of documents presented to inspectors.

### Is the State Department ready to handle the expected rush of passport applications?

- To meet an unprecedented increase in passport demand, we have been expanding our production capacity. In Fiscal Year 2006, we produced a record 12.1 million passports; workload this year is about 26% above the same period last year – up 60 percent over two years ago.

### WHTI is supposed to take effect in two phases. Can you explain them?

- On January 8, 2007, U.S. citizens traveling by **air** between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid U.S. passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document.



**BORDER BRIEFING:** Staffers representing governors from two dozen states and territories gather at a State Department briefing on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

- As early as January 1, 2008, U.S. citizens traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by **land or sea** (including ferries), may be required to present a valid U.S. passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security. While recent legislative changes permit a later deadline, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are working to meet all requirements as soon as possible. Ample advance notice will be provided to enable the public to obtain passports or passport cards for land/sea entries.

### What can you tell us about the proposed passport card?

- The passport card will carry the rights and privileges of the traditional U.S. passport book, but cost less and be small enough to fit in a wallet. As currently envisioned, the card's use will be limited to land and sea border crossings.

### Will there be new requirements for travel to U.S. territories?

- No. Travel between the U.S. mainland and territories will not require a passport or passport card. ■

*For more information, visit:*

[http://travel.state.gov/travell/cbpmc/cbpmc\\_3013.html](http://travel.state.gov/travell/cbpmc/cbpmc_3013.html)



## ***Iraq Freedom: A View From the Ground (cont.)***

At the hangar, IECI spokesman Dr. Fayed Ayer briefed the local and Western press in Arabic and English. He displayed boxes of ballots being labeled for delivery, forklifts wheeling around crates of ballots, and long lines of flatbed trucks ready to take their cargo of freedom to all corners of the country. The photos were carried by wire services around the world, and newscasts in the Middle East and United States aired prime time segments highlighting the very real election preparations being spearheaded by Iraqis.

Having the opportunity to visit Iraq four times over the last 18 months was an awesome experience. I'm honored to have been able to help highlight the tremendous progress made by the good people of Iraq, aided by our professionals in the military and diplomatic corps. The big picture can be difficult to discern from the small scope of news that is regularly featured on our front pages and daily broadcasts. The work ahead in Iraq is hard and unrelenting. And yet everyday millions of Iraqis, side-by-side with the men and women in our coalition, get up, go to work, and trudge forward against the forces of terror and anarchy. Let us honor them by continuing to give the support they need to complete their mission. ■

*The writer, Neil H. Zimmerman, is a former Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs.*

## **U.S. Elected Officials Abroad**

### ***September 2006***

- Texas State Senator Jane Nelson meets with members of the Lombardy Regional Council in Milan, Italy



MEETING IN MILAN: Texas State Senator Jane Nelson speaks with Robi Ronza, Delegate for Development and Consolidation of International Relations for the President of the Lombardy Region. The meeting was coordinated by the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in Washington and the Consulate General in Milan, Italy. September 4, 2006.

### ***October 2006***

- Rockford, IL Mayor Larry Morrissey leads trade mission to Changzhou, China (Sister City)
- Indiana Lt. Gov Becky Skillman leads trade mission to Taiwan and Vietnam
- Ohio Gov. Bob Taft leads trade mission to Mexico
- National Conference of State Legislatures officers embark on study tour of Italy
- Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire leads trade mission to South Korea
- Washington Lt. Gov. Brad Owen leads trade mission to Brazil

## **What IGA Can Do For YOU...**

### **We help you reach U.S. foreign policy makers and subject matter experts:**

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- Create a forum in which your foreign policy views can be heard by senior Department officials.

### **We are your One Stop Service Center:**

- Provide information on foreign policy, international trade, exchanges, and protocol issues;
- Engage the support of U.S. Embassies or Missions for official delegations' travel abroad; and
- Direct state and local officials to the appropriate Department office for international travel or foreign policy concerns.

### **Information Requests**

Contact us by phone, e-mail, or regular mail at:

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## **IGA on the Horizon**

*Be sure to check this section each quarter for updates...*

### **NOVEMBER 2006**

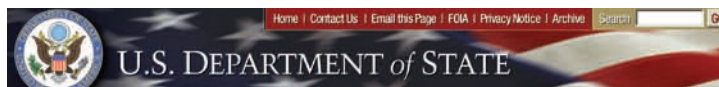
Nov 30- The Council of State Governments Annual Meeting,  
Dec 3 Phoenix, AZ

### **DECEMBER 2006**

5-8 National Conference of State Legislatures Fall Forum,  
San Antonio, TX  
5-9 National League of Cities Congress of Cities and  
Exposition, Reno, NV  
6-9 American Legislative Exchange Council States &  
Nation Policy Summit, Phoenix, AZ

### **JANUARY 2007**

24-26 US Conference of Mayors, Winter Meeting,  
Washington, DC



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